

**Application to Become a Sister City
In Conjunction with the City of La Crosse, Wisconsin**

The International Committee offers approved organizations an affiliation with Sister Cities International and representation in city events. Individual Sister City organizations are expected to be responsible for the majority of expenses related to exchanges and hosting. A limited fund is available, with Committee approval, for defined Sister City expenses.

In order to be considered as a Sister City of La Crosse, a supporting organization must submit this application to the City of La Crosse International Committee. Upon receipt of the application, the organization will be contacted with a date to appear before the committee to answer any questions about the application.

The Committee will make a recommendation to the City Council as to accept or reject the application. The final decision rests with the City Council.

1. Contact Information of Person Submitting the Application:

Name: Diane Vaaler Withers

Address: 119 N 24th St, La Crosse, WI 54601

Phone: 608. 785. 0877

Email: diane.vwithers@gmail.com

2. City and Country of the Proposed Sister City:

Kumbo, Cameroon (West Africa)

3. Please describe the proposed city and reasons that make the Proposed City suitable to be a Sister City with La Crosse. For example, the areas may have similar geography, culture, heritage, economic bases, or may be linked historically, educationally or economically.

(see attached)

#3 Describe the proposed city and reasons that make this city suitable to be a Sister City with La Crosse.

Kumbo is the second largest city in the N.W. Province of Cameroon. It lies about 2000m above sea level and is approximately 110 km from Bamenda (the provincial capital of the N.W Province) Kumbo's population (2005 census) is 80,212 and is split into three distinctive hilly settlements. The city is known for horse racing, traditional medicine, its palace, a market and two hospitals. (Banso Baptist Hospital and Shisong Hospital – St. Elizabeth's) Kumbo is the capital city of the NSO Kingdom. Kumbo lies within the English speaking area of Cameroon. French is also spoken as well as other tribal languages. German settlers arrived in 1912 and established their mission in 1913.

Some linking attributes between the cities of Kumbo and La Crosse include:

- **Similar population size**
- **English speaking**
- **Hilly topography**
- **Medical facilities – two hospitals including international medical personnel exchanges; a cardiac center at St. Elizabeth's with potential interchange with our local medical centers.**
- **Current, established relationships and exchange with Western Technical College staff in the Dental and Computer Programs as well as established exchanges with the Nursing Program at Viterbo University.**
- **Current and ongoing relationships/support with the La Crosse Friends of Cameroon re: an encompassing medical technical support project in Shisong (Kumbo and beyond)**
- **Ongoing courses taught in Shisong by faculty and staff at Viterbo/St. Rose Convent.**
- **Ongoing La Crosse meetings attended by Cameroonian Franciscan religious for the furthering of medical needs support and human resource development etc...**
- **Current Cameroonian students attending Viterbo through the FSPA connection.**

Besides the above relationships between the two cities, there is also an earnest and motivated desire from the city of Kumbo's officials to become our sister city! They care deeply about promoting friendship and alliances between our citizens. They see this as an opportunity to develop awareness and appreciation for one another's culture, and look forward to developing local initiatives for global developments.

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4. Is there a formal (i.e. 501(c)3) or informal (i.e. club) group or organization that supports the proposed Sister City?

Yes

No

* a memorandum of understanding with the FSPA.

Describe: (see attached)

IF THERE IS NOT AN ORGANIZATION THAT SUPPORTS THE APPLICATION, THE COMMITTEE CANNOT ENTERTAIN AN APPLICATION.

5. Is the Supporting Organization formally structured? For example, does the organization have elected officers or a board of directors?

Yes FSPA/Common Venture

No LaX Friends of Cameroon Comm. FSPA & LaX Friends

If not, please explain how decisions are made: (see attached)

The LaCrosse Friends of Cameroon is a steering committee; the committee as a whole makes decisions.

6. Please list the names of the officers and / or board of directors and describe the official structure of the supporting organization. Include how many years or months the supporting organization has been in operation. Please attach a separate page if needed.

(see attached) ↓ 2008 to present

7. Please describe any past activities of the supporting organization with the proposed Sister City:

(see attached)

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Attached is the memorandum of understanding between the La Crosse Friends of Cameroon group and the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. This partnering with their Common Venture Mission is a stable partnership. The Common Venture is a voluntary organization of religious communities who abide by the mission of the organization. Their mission statement includes a deepening of Global Church, opening new understanding and experiences of equi-cultural relationships, and supporting and encouraging mutual efforts to effect systemic change. The Franciscan Common Venture is involved in the following areas in Kumbo/Shisong: health care, education, outreach clinics, dental care, peace conferences etc...

Financial accounts are kept in a line item of the master budget of FSPA who is a member of the Franciscan Common Venture.

July 27, 2012

Sister Linda Mershon, President
and Sister Marlene Weisenbeck
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
912 Market Street
La Crosse, WI 54601-4782

Dear Sister Linda and Sister Marlene:

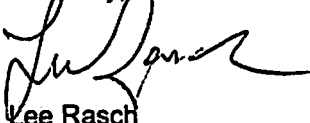
As you know, an active group of citizens formed the **La Crosse Friends of Cameroon** in 2008. The group is committed to the improved health and well-being of the population in Cameroon through support to the Franciscan Sisters. The initial project (a description is attached) was the Cameroon Healthcare Technology Project. A cornerstone element to this project was the enrollment of Sister Kathleen Shela and Sister Virgilia Wirngo at Western Technical College to study computer networking. To date, \$36,750.45 has been raised to for tuition, fees, books, materials, and technology in support of their program. All educational expenses are covered, leaving a balance of \$1,685.28 for funding the acquisition of technology to support establishing computer networks at St. Elizabeth's Hospital and the satellite clinics throughout Cameroon. The La Crosse Friends of Cameroon has also acquired several computer servers and other technology items. We are now exploring options to ship these items to Cameroon to help in the establishment of the network.

To date, the Western Technical College Foundation served as the sponsoring 501c3 organization in the solicitation, collection and management of funds raised for this project. This was a very appropriate role because phase one of the project was focused upon the support for the two sisters in their educational program at Western. Now that phase one is nearing an end, the La Crosse Friends of Cameroon are looking at raising funds to support the expanded technology network in Cameroon. Since this phase is primarily outside of the purpose and scope of the Western Technical College Foundation, we are seeking a partnership with the Common Venture and the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Under this partnership arrangement:

- * • The La Crosse Friends of Cameroon will continue to raise funds and seek support for expanding the technology network in Cameroon.
- When donations are received, we will accept them on behalf of the Common Venture and the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (FSPA)
- The La Crosse Friends of Cameroon will provide periodic updates of the efforts of the group.

On behalf of the La Crosse Friends of Cameroon, we express our thanks for your willingness to provide support. Best wishes in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,



Lee Rasch

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Cameroon Healthcare Technology Project

Project Overview

In June 2008, Lee Rasch, President of Western Technical College visited St Elizabeth's Hospital in Shisong, Cameroon. During the trip, he visited six clinics in Western Cameroon (there are a total of 16 clinics operated by the Franciscan Sisters). Poverty is very pervasive and there is a high incidence of disease, notably HIV and malaria. There is a clear need to provide extended health care throughout the country, particularly in remote areas. With very poor roads, travel to the clinics is difficult for patients and family members and medical support frequently lags behind the need.

Despite the poor infrastructure in Cameroon, cell phone towers are emerging as an alternative to non-existent (or extremely poor) land lines. The potential exists to use computer network technology to provide improved linkages between the clinic sites to better serve the patient population in Cameroon. The key will be to train personnel to establish, manage and maintain the technology connections.

As a result of this need, the Cameroon Healthcare Technology Project was established. The La Crosse Friends of Cameroon organization was formed to raise support for the project. With this support, two sisters from Cameroon (Sister Kathleen and Sister Virgilia) are receiving training leading to an associate of applied science degree in computer applications and network specialist operations at Western Technical College and upon their return to their native country will establish technology linkages among the 16 clinic sites. Sister Kathleen is scheduled to graduate in May of 2012; Sister Virgilia will graduate in August 2012.

The project will also establish an internet computer lab for the nursing program at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Shisong, Cameroon. They will use the equipment for computerized hospital information systems, resulting in improved efficiency and accuracy in patient tracking and the management of patient information. The project will also help to connect patients with their families and allow for the development of an online patient appointment system. Finally, the project facility will provide an opportunity for foreign health students from the USA, China, England and The Netherlands to communicate and study tropical health medicine.

To date, the La Crosse Friends of Cameroon have raised more than \$31,000 for academic expenses. These funds will cover their costs for education (phase 1). Now the project focuses on phase 2, the need to access funding and support for the technology as described in this project overview. The combination of the improvement of the technology infrastructure coupled with the investment in the development of the technical skills of both sisters will result in long-term improvements in healthcare and healthcare access throughout Cameroon.

The Western Technical College Foundation provides oversight for the Cameroon Healthcare Technology Project. The Western Technical College Foundation was established in 1972 to support Western Technical College and the students it serves. The Foundation is a not-for-profit, IRS approved 501c (3) corporation chartered to provide financial support for the educational needs of Western Technical College that cannot be met through state aid or student tuition.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting Lee Rasch at Western Technical College, 400 7th Street North, La Crosse, WI (608) 785-9100 or by email at raschl@westerntc.edu

February 2012

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September 26, 2012

Sr. Euphrasia Yuh, Provincial Superior
Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis

Sister Euphrasia:

I am glad we had the opportunity visit during your recent stay in our community. It has been wonderful to get to know you and to appreciate your patient, persistent passion for your mission in Cameroon.

I am pleased to learn you are interested in advancing the possibility of a Sister City relationship between La Crosse, Wisconsin, USA and Kumbo, Cameroon. La Crosse has several Sister City relationships with various cities around the world, including Dubna, Russia; Epinol, France; and Luoyang, China. These relationships have resulted in numerous exchanges between the communities which has led to increased understanding and enhanced opportunities.

As you know, I have had the opportunity to visit Kumbo in 2008 as part of my visit to the various clinics associated with St. Elizabeth's Hospital. The attached document describes the Healthcare and Technology Project that has developed as an outgrowth of this visit. I believe establishing a formal Sister City relationship would enhance the likelihood for developing future projects of a similar nature.

The Sister City organization in La Crosse has expressed an interest in exploring a relationship with Kumbo. It is my understanding that the first step in establishing a Sister City relationship would be correspondence from city leaders expressing mutual interest. Please share this correspondence with the Mayor of Kumbo as an expression of encouragement to consider this initial step.

I look forward to the opportunity to return to Cameroon. Meanwhile, best wishes to you and to all in your community.

Sincerely,



Lee Rasch
President
Chair, La Crosse Friends of Cameroon

Letter from mayor of Kumbo, Cameroon

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

PAIX- TRAVAIL- PATRIE

MINISTERE DE L'ADMINISTRATION TERRITORIALE
ET DECENTRALISATION

REGION DU NORD OUEST

DEPARTEMENT DE BUI

COMMUNE DE KUMBO

B.P. 3 KUMBO/Tel: 33 48 10 11

E mail:kuc_tobin@yahoo.com

Site web: www.kumbocouncil.org



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

PEACE- WORK-FAHERLAND

MINISTRY OF TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION
AND DECENTRALISATION

NORTH WEST REGION

BUI DIVISION

KUMBO COUNCIL

P.O. BOX 3 KUMBO/Tel: 33 48 10 11

E-mail:kuc_tobin@yahoo.com

Web site: www.kumbocouncil.org

03 OCT 2012

Kumbo, the

THE MAYOR,

LE MAIRE

Subject: Sister City Relationship

To: Ms. Diane Withers

119 N 24th St. Lacrosse, WI, USA 54601

Dear Ms. Diane

It is with great joy and anticipation that I write to you. It is indeed a pleasure to know from Sr. Euphresia the interest you are expressing about future sister city relationship with Kumbo.

This relationship between Kumbo and Lacrosse will enable us to cultivate and encourage goodwill and understanding between our communities and to promote friendship and a lasting alliance between our citizens. This will also be a basis for raising interest in North/South relations and inter-dependence; getting people involved in local initiatives for global development; developing awareness and appreciation for one another's culture and reflection on our own lifestyles, attitudes and aspirations.

You can learn more about the Kumbo Council on www.kumbocouncil.org. We will be most obliged to provide additional information about Kumbo at your request.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Accept my most esteemed regards.



NJONG FONUYU Donatus

Mayor, Kumbo Council

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8. By accepting the proposed city as a Sister City of La Crosse, what benefits may the citizens of the area expect?

(see attached)

Please provide any additional comments to assist with the Committee's review and discussion of the application:

We sincerely look forward to making this new sister city a reality! Dr. Lee Rasch & Diane V. Withers will be happy to have further discussions or present this proposal to appropriate city officials.

Please return this completed form to:

Linda Pfaff, Chair
City of La Crosse International Committee
Mayor's Office
City Hall
400 N. La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

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8 Benefits for citizens –

- **A furthering of global community awareness – specifically between the U.S and Africa**
- **Specific cultural sharing opportunities including educational/student/teacher experiences**
- **Potential for business connections for entrepreneurs as well as existing employers**
- **Opportunities for the La Crosse medical communities to share expertise with Kumbo's hospitals including the only Sub-Sahara cardiac center at St. Elizabeth's hospital.**
- **Possibility of unique travel experiences not available through regular avenues.**